An improved quality of life through a safer Nova Scotia

Ministers' Task Force on

Safer Streets and Communities

Report to the Minister of Justice - May 1997

NOVA SCOTIA
Justice

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Background

In May 2006, Justice Minister Murray Scott announced the creation of a Minister's Task Force on Safer Streets and Communities.

The decision to create the Task Force was driven by government's concern about crime and its effects on Nova Scotians. While there had been a decrease in the overall crime rate in Nova Scotia in recent years, it remained the highest among the Atlantic Provinces and marginally higher than Canada's overall crime rate. Additionally, unlike the national trend, the youth crime rate in Nova Scotia had increased in the three years prior to May 2006, driven in part by an increase in youth violent crime.

Self reported victimization rates in Nova Scotia were also increasing. According to the 2004 General Social Survey[1], the violent victimization rate in Nova Scotia increased 65 per cent between 1999 and 2004. Additionally, in 2004, Nova Scotia noted the second highest self-reported violent victimization rate in the country and Halifax had the highest rate among large urban cores with over populations over 100,000.

Reports of street crime, particularly the behavior of a small number of out of control youth, dismayed Nova Scotians. Communities were also experiencing the negative impacts of illegal drugs, especially in schools, and incidents of property crimes and theft. Violence against women and children, substance abuse, robberies and homicides in Nova Scotia are also issues of concern to Nova Scotians.

These crimes were and are cause for concern, not only for the justice system, but for all aspects of Nova Scotia society. There was an obvious concern for personal safety, which impairs our quality of life. There is also an economic cost, as crime not only negatively impacts the financial circumstances of victims, it takes an increasingly significant amount of taxpayers money to administer the criminal justice system.

Recognizing that strong and safe communities result from a mix of social, economic and enforcement factors, in announcing the Task Force Minister Scott underscored the need for dialogue and cooperation among many partners including police forces, community agencies, municipalities and citizens. A multi-pronged approach is required, including significant and serious enforcement; offender supervision and rehabilitation; and programs that address the root causes of crime.

In October 2006, advertisements seeking volunteer Task Force members were placed in newspapers and on the Department of Justice website. Selection criteria focused on diversity of age, gender, ethnicity, geography. Representatives were sought from law enforcement, community development, youth, crime victims, social services, education, health and government.

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1 The General Social Survey is a survey administered by Statistics Canada every 5 years. The survey asks a representative sample of Canadian respondents aged 15 and older various questions regarding whether/ in what manner they were victims of crime. This survey captures both reported and unreported crimes.

Task Force Composition, Mandate and Consultation

Following a review of more than 80 applications, in December 2006 the Minister of Justice announced the Minister's Task Force on Safer Streets and Communities with 25 volunteer community members from diverse backgrounds: (Biographies can be viewed at **www.gov.ns.ca/just**).

- **Frank Beazley, Halifax** (Task Force Co-chair)
- **Oralee O'Byrne, Parrsboro** (Task Force Co-chair)
- **Ingrid Brodie, Kentville**
- **Frank Capstick, Glace Bay**
- **Owen Carrigan, Halifax**
- **Tara Connolly, Halifax**
- **Timothy Cremo, Eskasoni**
- **Tim Crooks, Halifax**
- **Barb Dewtie, Pictou County**
- **Janice Fraser, New Glasgow**
- **Pamela Harrison, Halifax**
- **Donald Jacquard, Wedgeport**
- **Franz Kesick, Truro**
- **Frank MacArthur, New Glasgow**
- **Jim MacLeod, Sydney**
- **Harold Miller, Amherst**
- **Steve Miller, Newport**
- **Jane Moffat Schnare, Bridgewater**
- **Jemell Moriah, Dartmouth**
- **David Olding, Halifax**
- **Brad Parks, Port Hawksbury**
- **Barbara Ann Simmons, North Preston**
- **Stephanie Simonsen, Truro**
- **Colette Williams-Dooks, Jeddore**
- **Carolann Wright Parks, Beechville**

The mandate of the Task Force was to consult with Nova Scotians and prepare a report to the Minister that would:

- **identify best practices and promote programs and actions that are making a positive impact in communities in Nova Scotia;**
- **highlight best practices and legislation being used in other areas of the country and abroad, for consideration, and;**
- **identify ways to support communities which are making efforts to address situations that have a negative effect on their neighbourhoods.**

The Minister's Task Force received orientation to the context of crime prevention and what is known about its importance to Nova Scotians in December 2006 and January 2007. During this orientation, Task Force members reviewed:

- **their mandate**
- **national and provincial crime perspectives**
- **what communities have said to government in the past**
- **risk and protective factors related to crime and crime prevention (see Appendix A)**
- **why crime prevention is important to Nova Scotians (see Appendix B).**

Together they developed a vision, "An improved quality of life through a safer Nova Scotia".

A full document outlining the context of crime and regional crime profiles in Nova Scotia can be found on the Department of Justice website at **www.gov.ns.ca/just** .

Task Force members understood that studying crime and looking for solutions would be a challenge. They understood crime as a complex problem and that there is not a single 'magic' solution or cause of crime. However, they did share the Minister's belief that consultation with community members was key to generating ideas that would be helpful to the creation of a provincial crime prevention strategy. They also recognize that a crime prevention strategy would need to identify short, mid and long-term objectives.

Crime prevention was the focal issue addressed by the Minister's Task Force during consultations with Nova Scotians. The Task Force used a number of approaches to gather information and obtain input.

They developed a consultation questionnaire **(see Appendix C)** to help guide the discussions. They planned and conducted consultations with Nova Scotians through a series of public meetings, and focus groups with knowledgeable and experienced community members across the province.

A web page was created on the Department of Justice website to provide information about the Task Force, the context of crime, crime profiles and to invite comments through completion of a the questionnaire. They advertised the consultations through 28 newspaper advertisements, 23 radio announcements and ten media releases.

Between January and April 2007, the Task Force received input from approximately 800 people from communities all across Nova Scotia **(see Appendix D)**. There were 21 public meetings and 23 focus groups which allowed the Task Force to hear from concerned citizens and representatives of more than 50 organizations **(see Appendix E)**. Three focus groups were comprised entirely of youth and one was held in the Aboriginal community of Eskasoni. Approximately 120 Nova Scotians made written submissions, and there were 2133 visits to the Minister's Task Force web page.

Summary of Key Issues

Nova Scotians told the Minister's Task Force that vigorous attention is needed to address crime to restore their sense of safety and pride in having a province where citizens can count on a satisfying quality of life. At the same time, they called for serious collaboration on crime prevention.

During consultations Nova Scotians identified key issues and urged individuals, parents, communities and government to embrace a sense of joint responsibility for a safer Nova Scotia by working together to deal with the following issues:

- **adult and youth crime**
- **root causes of crime**
- **fear and under reporting of crime**
- **changing social values**
- **exclusion**
- **approaches and cultural relevance**
- **accountability**
- **Youth Criminal Justice Act**
- **parental supervision and discipline**
- **investment for healthy individuals, families and communities**
- **learning options, school attachment and retention**
- **youth empowerment**
- **recreation**
- **access**
- **awareness**
- **multi-disciplinary co-ordination**
- **collaboration**

Questions posed by the Task Force during consultations were intended to elicit input about all aspects of crime. Some feedback focused significant attention on adult crime that is organized, highly lucrative and preys on vulnerable members of society. Concerns were raised about **adult crime** that lures others into fraud, drug use and trafficking, and internet crime. Adult crime that is recurring in nature is considered to have the most impact on society. However, the vast majority of feedback focused on public concern about youth issues and **youth crime** involving drugs, violence, theft and vandalism.

Nova Scotians told the Task Force they believe there are **root causes of crime**, including:

- **substance abuse and addictions**
- **powerlessness, hopelessness**
- **lack of accountability**
- **lack of respect for self and others**
- **poverty**
- **inadequate early intervention**
- **societal acceptance of drugs**
- **inappropriate lenient sentencing**
- **inadequate employment for youth and adults**
- **youth boredom**
- **lack of guidance**
- **poor connection and involvement with communities**
- **lack of community recreation facilities and services**
- **poor role models**
- **lack of social programs**
- **school drop out**
- **inconsistent and/or harsh discipline**
- **lack of engagement or parental interaction**
- **family breakdown and violence in the homes**

This input is consistent with research related to risk factors and the understanding gained by the Task Force about 'causes of crime' in terms of risk factors that can accumulate and influence behaviour **(see Appendix A)**.

Fear of reporting and under reporting of crime was a significant message of concern. Participants said that seniors, victims of family violence, and people who know perpetrators often feared reporting crime. Other comments indicated minor crimes may not be reported because people don't believe police take them as seriously as more major crime due to reports of inadequate police resources. People also expressed fears of retaliation and vigilantism.

People repeatedly commented on the **changing nature of social values**. They made specific reference to increased societal acceptance of substance abuse (especially cannabis); desensitization of the public because of violence and sexual images in media; decreased respect for self and others related to character development and empathy; decreasing role of the faith based organizations in the community; lack of positive role models; and reduced community connectedness.

The impact of social and economic **exclusion** was highlighted. The impact of racism, community disconnectedness, poverty, in addition to the stigma of mental illness and disability, and being an offender were identified as concerns related to root causes of crime. Concern was expressed about an increasing over representation of African Nova Scotian youth and Aboriginal peoples in the criminal justice system. It was suggested that discrimination, anger, and a sense of powerlessness and hopelessness may have precipitated criminal activity.

The Task Force was told that **approaches to crime prevention** should use a community development model and should be **culturally relevant**. It was felt that a community development approach would result in sustainable programs. Input from African Nova Scotian, Aboriginal and other community members indicated that primary objectives should be social and economic inclusion, celebration of cultural diversity, promotion of community assets, belongingness and community pride.

The issue of **accountability** was consistently raised during consultations. There were many passionate messages asking for stronger deterrence, sentencing, restitution and accountability. Individuals were urged to be accountable for their actions, show respect for themselves and others, and consider the impact of their actions on the well being of others before choosing to act in a constructive (positive) or destructive (criminal) manner. Parents and caregivers were identified as needing to be accountable for providing child guidance and supervision, and for instilling values. They were urged to be positive role models and to be significantly involved in their children's lives by encouraging, supporting and witnessing their interests. All those in the justice system, especially judges, were encouraged to be more accountable by taking actions that result in stiffer sentencing and follow-up practices.

The public constantly expressed concern about the **Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)** and urged government to continue lobbying for changes to the YCJA that put in place stronger sentencing for serious and repeat offences. This was a priority for Nova Scotians who believe that clear a message needs to be sent that criminal behaviour is not acceptable. Monitoring to ensure compliance with sentences and to address root causes of crime were also encouraged.

The Task Force received many messages from participants about inadequate **parental supervision and discipline**. They noted that parental supervision can be impacted by factors such as inadequate parenting skills and parents who are engaged in criminal activities. The public expressed that too much emphasis has been placed on child rights without adequate attention paid to teaching children about responsibilities. They believe this has contributed to confusion and inaction among many parents, who fear they are unable to fully supervise and discipline their children for fear it will be interpreted as physical abuse.

Consultation participants identified the need for significant support for early intervention, prevention, diversion and rehabilitation. They called for **investments** in:

- **healthy communities, through approaches that enhance community development, crime prevention partnerships, recreation and leadership;**
- **healthy families, through increased investment in early intervention for positive child and youth development, support for parents to gain skills, and in initiatives that foster community connections; and**
- **healthy individuals, through programs that address poverty to ensure basic needs are met and actions that encourage full development of individual potential.**

Many people expressed concern about **learning options, school attachment and retention**. Value was placed on the need to prepare students for higher education by maintaining a traditional focus on core curriculum i.e. reading, writing and math, without imposing inflexibility. People said that for children to gain maximum benefit from school there needs to be an overall safe environment combined with a sense of connection to the curriculum, the teaching staff, other students and the school community. People expressed the view that schools should provide:

- **options according to children's learning styles**
- **mental health, addictions, disabilities and other counselling supports and services**
- **early access to trades and apprenticeship program**
- **appropriate alternate learning environments**
- **in-school suspensions**

It was felt that there would be a greater likelihood of school attachment if these supports were available.

People believe **youth** need to feel a sense of personal confidence and **empowerment**. People reported that society does not place enough value on child and youth development. They believe this contributes to a widespread sense of disempowerment, disengagement and hopelessness on the part of youth who turn to crime.

Some of the following quotes, taken from Task Force consultation input, express views about youth feelings of disempowerment, the responsibility community members feel toward caring about and valuing children and youth, as well as ideas about engaging and empowering youth.

" If they don't care about me then why should I care " is a quote that seems to express youth feelings of disempowerment and hopelessness.

There were many quotes that spoke about the impact of negative adult role models and the responsibility adults feel for the inclusion of children and youth in community, e.g:

" Youth could look at adults and say adults are out of control "

" From the very beginning, we use language that is inclusion and exclusion - e.g. Kids with advantages, kids with opportunities versus kids growing up in poverty. We need to frame this. Kids come into the world with the ability to thrive and it's what the world provides to them that determines outcomes "

" Everyone wants to be seen, heard and validated "

" How are youth connected to the community? "

" The youth are our future "

" It takes a village to raise a child - a sense of duty and responsibility "

" It's the community's responsibility if a child fails "

As well there were quotes that described the positive attitude and value adults place on youth today:

- **" Kids are every bit as good as they were 35 plus years ago "**
- **" All kids need to be a gleam in someone's eye – if they can't get it from their parents they need to get it from someone else "**

Participants also reflected on how to approach program support for youth so that they experience a sense of empowerment, as indicated in the following quotes:

- **" Programs that work offer hope to youth so that they can reach their potential "**
- **" One size does not fit all - there are many cultures and we must go to communities and hear (what they think will work) "**
- **" We've got to throw the walls down and say come on in "**
- **" Kids aren't likely to disrupt a program that they had involvement in (creating) "**

Finally, **"if you care about me I will care about you"** speaks of youth hopefulness and **"I was committing crimes... then went to a school where people really cared... some (kids) need a push and some need to go to jail... I wish I could tell other youth what I experienced and help them"** speaks to the degree to which youth are willing to reach out and help other youth, in the process of actively participating in crime prevention.

Recreation and a wide variety of activities were considered essential to the fabric of a safe community. Recreation, arts, music and other activities were identified as effective ways to relieve child and youth boredom, engage parents and other adults, foster healthy minds and bodies, promote self-esteem and teach life skills.

Access to services, schools and community facilities needs to be ensured for recreation during non-school hours. Concerns were raised about inequitable access to services in rural areas. Wait lists for programs and services to address addictions, mental health issues, family challenges and child development need to be reduced as citizens believe they contribute to unresolved social, health and community issues that can lead to crime. Lack of adequate options, entrance criteria, fees and the high cost of liability insurance are some of the factors that contribute to restricted access to schools, recreational programs, health and social services, trades and apprenticeship training and community meeting places.

There was widespread input regarding the lack of adequate **awareness** about available resources related to early intervention, parenting, community mobilization, crime prevention, life skills and subsidies for recreation program participation. People also believe the media can take a more active role in promoting positive social messages.

Multi-disciplinary co-ordination was highlighted during consultation as an essential element to effective collaboration. Participants identified a need for designated people to coordinate collaboration. **Collaboration** has many definitions, but for the purpose of this discussion can be considered 'joint responsibility for and participation in achieving mutually satisfactory outcomes'. Participants stressed the need for multi-disciplinary and broad–based collaboration among government, community, business, and law enforcement.

What We Heard

This section of the report will summarize what the Task Force heard from Nova Scotians who made written submissions and who attended focus groups and public meetings.

Crime Profiles

When asked about crimes in their community, there was general consensus among participants that the information provided by the Task Force was similar to their general understanding or experience of crime in their region. There were requests for more detailed community–level crime profiles. The Task Force conveyed these requests to the Department of Justice recommending they pursue a 'Community Counts' method of collecting information to help communities improve their understanding about local crime and assist them in crime prevention planning.

Although participants generally agreed with the crime profiles, participants identified specific crimes of concern. Crimes associated with drugs were the most identified type of concern, followed by crimes involving violence, in particular family violence, swarming, violence with a weapon and sexual assaults. Theft and vandalism were cited most often after drugs and violence. Other crimes raised include mischief, internet crime, organized crime and impaired driving.

Causes of Crime

When people were asked to identify what they felt was causing crime in their communities they identified economic challenges, housing needs, changing social and cultural values and issues associated with exclusion. They also referenced specific health, social and educational system issues along with enforcement and lenient criminal justice responses.

People most often identified 'causes of crime' according to societal, community, family and individual–level factors. (The check mark - ✔ - next to some items indicates that youth also identified these issues as factors they believe are 'causing' crime.)

At the societal level, factors identified were poverty (✔); inadequate early intervention in areas such as social services and addictions; lack of employment for adults and youth (✔); societal acceptance of drugs (✔); and inappropriate or lenient sentencing.

At the community level, factors identified were youth boredom due to insufficient activities and support to access activities (✔); poor role models; lack of connection and involvement with their communities; and lack of facilities and services such as daycare and public transit.

At the family level, ineffective parenting practices, family distress and intergenerational cycles of violence were named, specifically, factors identified were inconsistent/harsh discipline; lack of guidance (✔), lack of engagement and parental interaction (✔); family breakdown; and violence in the home (✔).

At the individual level, factors identified were substance abuse and addictions (✔); powerlessness/hopelessness (✔); lack of accountability; and lack of respect for self and others. Also identified were disengagement from community, risk taking behaviour, anti-social attitudes, lack of skills and mental health issues.

Concerns About Crime:

The Task Force asked participants to share their main concerns regarding crime in their communities. Responses to this question covered a range of issues, including personal safety, inadequate policing, the criminal justice response, intervention, funding, engagement, and victims of crime. Some societal trends were points of concern as well, along with community decline and associated economic impacts.

Participants cited fear of retaliation as one of the main factors influencing under reporting of crime. They expressed many safety concerns related to their homes, schools and communities, with particular reference to child safety. As well, inconsistent and/or lenient sentencing, inadequate early intervention, senior safety and accessibility to drugs were noted.

Youth were generally concerned about the impact of crime on their family and friends.

Currently Preventing Crime:

Participants identified dozens of things they are proud of in their communities which they believe are helping to prevent crime. The Task Force has grouped these into community, family and school-based initiatives. (The check mark - ✔ - next to some initiatives indicates that youth also identified these issues as helpful in preventing crime.)

Identified **community-based** initiatives were broken down into a number of catergories:

- **community crime prevention**
- **recreational activities**
- **policing initiatives**
- **rehabilitation programming**
- **community development and engagement**
- **skills development initiatives**
- **business activities**
- **awareness programming and legislation**

The four most often cited community–based initiatives were

- **Neighbourhood Watch (✔);**
- **various forms of recreational activity (✔);**
- **youth centres (✔);**
- **and strong police presence for developing relationships and gathering intellegence.**

Participants also identified numerous initiatives they feel are working at the **family-level**:

- **parent involvement and supervision (✔), such as active coaching, teaching kids about consequences and volunteering**
- **parenting support programs such as pre-natal counselling and home visiting**
- **family resource centres**
- **providing kids with skills**

At the **school-level**, participants identified initiatives they believe are making a difference. The feedback was broken down into areas such as programming, policing, supports and services and extra-curricular activity. The top initiatives identified were:

- **DARE (Drug and Alcohol Resistance Education)**
- **community police in the schools**
- **Roots of Empathy**
- **anti-bullying programs**
- **youth health centres**

Youth did not specifically reference school based initiatives, however, there was general reference to the importance youth place on school (✔) and the value of school-based individual drug counselling (✔).

Other Solutions to Consider:

This question generated the most responses. The Task Force amassed approximately 18 pages of solutions that were suggested to help make communities safer. The solutions the Task Force recommend as most worthy of additional review are described below and are specifically listed in **Appendix G.** (The check mark - ✔ - next to some items indicates that youth also identified these issues as potentially helpful in preventing crime.)

Participants most often expressed that any initiative that serves to increase accountability for all should be a priority. This includes accountability of family, in particular parents; individuals (including adults, youth and children); the community in terms of leadership and involvement; as well as system accountability, including judges, government and police.

At the **community-level**, responses suggest that efforts to increase accountability, youth engagement (✔) and respect (✔) and promoting a strong police presence (✔) were of greatest interest. It was suggested that youth recreation (✔) and access to programs that youth consider to be 'cool' were important. Participants noted that access would be affected by the availability of transportation. Adopting a strong crime prevention focus for all initiatives was also stressed.

At the **family-level**, participants identified numerous support services, engagement initiatives, educational programs and tools, as well as incentives that could help prevent crime. Supportive parenting programs topped the list, with references to assessment and testing to determine support needs, along with support to develop coping skills. This was followed by encouraging parent involvement (✔) and child responsibility. There was reference to the need to respect parental discipline, but as previously noted there was confusion about how to know if a particular discipline would be considered physically abusive.

At the **school-level**, participants identified the need for in-school suspensions (✔); alternative education options (✔) such as vocational training and apprenticeships; and more community police in schools (✔). School attachment initiatives and ensuring access to schools for use by the community during evenings, weekends and summer were also recommended.

The Role of Community:

People identified a number of roles they would be willing to play to help prevent crime in their communities. These roles were grouped into areas such as leadership and ownership; getting involved; educating; volunteering; advocating; and investing.

The key roles most often cited by participants were willingness to:

- **take ownership of their communities**
- **join crime prevention groups such as Citizens on Patrol and Neighbourhood Watch**
- **report incidents to police**
- **volunteer to work with kids**

The Role of Provincial Government:

Participants identified many roles for government in preventing crime, in areas such as:

- **funding**
- **leadership**
- **coordination**
- **legislation**
- **engagement**
- **communication**
- **programming and evaluation**
- **research**
- **improving government structures and practices**

(Please note - ✔ - The check mark next to the role indicates youth also identify it as one for government to play in preventing crime.)

The most frequently identified role for government is as a funder, in particular providing sustainable core funding (✔) for programming in health, addictions, community services, and non-governmental crime prevention initiatives and organizations. Government was also seen as responsible for funding programs that ensure child and youth participation in recreation (✔), providing crime prevention coordinators, and ensuring access to facilities such as schools. Government was urged to assume the role of promoting a prevention focus by placing priority on delivery of early intervention services and comprehensive support for families. Government was seen to be the entity to provide leadership, coordination and collaboration across governments, agencies and communities.

Participants encouraged government to lobby for changes to the Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA). Participants urged government and to accept and act on public feedback, with specific reference to acting on recommendations made by the Minister's Task Force on Safer Streets and Communities.

The public are asking government to take the lead on ensuring stiffer sentences (✔) for offenders. They also want government to address obstacles faced by community members attempting to access facilities such schools. For example, the high cost of liability insurance.

Other Issues:

It is worth noting that some Nova Scotians suggested that delivery of recreation services would be best located with municipal governments.

Participants stressed the importance of partnerships between education and recreation to ensure all children and youth have access to recreation and leisure opportunities.

In addition, participants indicated that while community crime prevention initiatives are currently funded through federal grants, it may be worth exploring the opportunity to make this a provincial program. This would help ensure that grants are in line with a provincial crime prevention strategy.

Findings and Recommended Priorities

This section outlines findings and priorities the Task Force recommends, according to its defined three-part mandate.

Mandate Part 'A': Best practices, programs and actions making a positive impact

The Task Force asked participants to tell them about initiatives in their communities that are helping to prevent crime. Through these consultations the Task Force learned about programs and approaches that are currently in place and valued by the community.

The list of specific programs and approaches **(see Appendix F)** should not be viewed as an endorsement of these initiatives, as Task Force members are not familiar with the specific outcomes expected or achieved by these programs. Consultation participants were not always specific about the reasons why they believe these programs are contributing to crime prevention, however, they do suggest these programs/approaches reflect the factors and principles that contribute to crime prevention. For example:

- **community ownership**
- **leadership**
- **connectedness**
- **pride**
- **volunteerism**
- **child and youth development**
- **child and youth engagement**
- **early intervention**
- **participation in recreation and other activities**
- **collaboration**
- **communication**
- **accountability (by community, justice system, individual, parents/caregivers)**
- **school attachment**
- **parental skill development**
- **family involvement**
- **crisis support**
- **positive school response to challenging behaviours**
- **character and skill development**

Mandate Part 'B': Part 'B' of the Task force mandate asks the Task Force to recommend best practices and legislation being used in other areas for possible use in Nova Scotia. The Task Force asked consultation participants, 'Can you suggest some other solutions to help make where you live safer, now and in the future?

Overall, the most prevalent suggestions related to accountability of parents, individuals, community and support systems, as well as strong enforcement and the need for social development to prevent crime **(see Appendix G)**.

Community-level responses encouraged a focus on approaches that will increase youth engagement and respect. They also promoted a strong police presence on the streets and community policing in the schools. Options to ensure that youth have access to recreation were stressed.

Family-level responses revolved around parenting education, support and engagement programs, as well as encouraging parental involvement in a child's life and the use of non-abusive discipline as appropriate.

School-level suggestions included in-school suspensions, alternative education options, more police/school partnerships and ensuring access to schools for use by the community during non-school hours.

The Task Force recommends the programs identified by participants listed in Appendix G be reviewed, by government, for potential application in Nova Scotia.

Mandate Part 'C': Part 'C' of the Task Force mandate asks the Task Force to "identify ways to support communities who are making efforts to address situations that have a negative effect on their neighbourhoods".

To respond to this request, the Task Force has identified eighteen recommended priorities for consideration in the development of a provincial crime prevention strategy. They are initially listed below, and then addressed individually in order to set out the context for each recommendation.

Recommended Priorities:

1. Enhance primary prevention and early intervention for children (birth to 5 years)
2. Enhance prevention and intervention with a focus on the provision of services in school (5 to 20 years)
3. Reduce wait time to ensure timely access to services
4. Provide support to parents
5. Focus resources to create conditions that support student attachment to school
6. Build capacity to offer alternative school options and flexible school programming with early access to trades, as appropriate
7. Remove barriers to participation in recreation programs for children and youth
8. Listen to youth
9. Provide core funding for nonprofit organizations that promote crime prevention
10. Support community mobilization: build leadership, enhance grassroots strengths and assets and engage business partners
11. Reduce impact of racism through promotion of social and economic inclusion
12. Remove access obstacles to schools and other community facilities
13. Reduce impact of illicit drugs on Nova Scotians through the development of a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary Nova Scotia Drug Strategy
14. Commit to ensuring adequate rehabilitation and reintegration support for offenders
15. Increase police resources
16. Ensure appropriate sentencing by strengthening the public prosecution services role in making stiffer sentencing recommendations
17. Examine alternatives, including specialty court processes, for appropriate responses to mental health, drug and domestic violence issues
18. Act on Task Force recommendations and report back to the community

1 Enhance primary prevention and early intervention for children (birth to 5 years)

All families, regardless of socio-economic status and culture, need the benefit of resources that will support them to positively contribute to the healthy growth and development of their children.

The Task Force suggests government consider expanding the scope of programs focused on primary prevention and early intervention for children between birth and five years of age.

During consultations, positive input was received about the Healthy Beginnings Program: Enhanced Home Visiting, however, concern was expressed that the focus of this program is on families facing challenges early on and providing intense, focused home visiting for the first three years of their child's life. This program could provide benefit to all families in Nova Scotia if the scope was broadened. The promotion of healthy child development, development of parenting skills and capacity, the enhancement of parent-child interaction and the connection of the family to community resources is key for all families.

Family Resource Centres are also identified as positive resources for families to obtain parent education, informal support, information and referral. However, the centres focus on families with children under the age of six years. With an expanded focus, this program could be a resource to support the development of all families. Parents and caregivers need people to talk to as they nurture their children through to adulthood. There is benefit in having a setting where caregivers can share their successes and work with others to address parenting challenges faced throughout the many stages of child and youth development.

2 Enhance prevention and intervention with a focus on the provision of services in school (5 to 20 years)

Nova Scotians were clear in identifying the need to provide enhanced prevention and intervention services in the schools. However, they also stated this should not be at the expense of the academic curriculum, and recognized that it would require additional resources.

Suggestions included:

- **focusing on skills and resiliency development**
- **expanding youth health centres to all schools**
- **providing wrap-around services to give students the asset-building support they need**
- **providing better access to youth addiction and detox programs**
- **meeting kids where they are every day**
- **providing a comfortable school environment free from stigma**
- **allowing teachers to teach**
- **ensuring a range of holistic multi-disciplinary services are provided at school**

Consultation participants indicated that positive results are realized when intervention services are delivered to children and their families at the school site as soon as possible.

It is recommended that a school based prevention and intervention strategy be developed for children and families 'at risk' that is holistic, co-ordinated, multi-agency and multi-disciplinary (e.g. engagement, assessment, counselling and referrals for mental health, community safety, addictions).

Government may wish to further explore a number of programs and resources identified e.g. Amherst and Guysborough High School's Youth Health Centres, Whole Child Program in Manitoba; the ASIST Program, Phoenix Centre prevention program; Professor Michael Ungar's work at Dalhousie University on fostering resilience; Professor Stephen Schneider's work at Saint Mary's University on the PALS program; and the Asset Building Program championed by Chief Barry King of Brookville.

3 Reduce wait time to ensure timely access to services

There was broad consensus regarding the need for increased and simplified access to services, such as mental health, addictions, individual and family counselling, residential support and secure treatment for children and youth.

It is suggested that alternate service delivery options be explored. Some examples include delivering services in specific communities using culturally appropriate approaches and by bringing services to the people i.e. delivering services in the schools.

There is also a need to enhance provincial interagency co-ordination and collaboration and to develop information sharing procedures that protect privacy, while at the same time expediting communication.

Examples of interagency collaborations that contributors deemed successful and worthy of further consideration are Northern Partners in the Northern Region of Nova Scotia and the Interagency Committee on Prescription Drug Abuse in Sydney, Cape Breton.

A frequently cited protocol for information sharing among professionals that could be considered for wider applicability is the High Risk Domestic Violence Case Coordination Protocol Framework.

4 Provide support to parents

Parents and caregivers have different learning styles, knowledge bases and external support networks, however, it is believed that all parents can benefit from access to information and support in areas such as parent skill development, child care, nurturing and discipline. Parents also require access to coaching/ mentoring support as they gain confidence and experience with newly acquired parenting skills.

A communication strategy is needed to promote increased awareness of available information and simplified access to support programs. Materials need to be made available in a variety of ways, including print, video and internet. These materials need to be made available through easily accessed community locations, such as hospitals, daycares, grocery stores, libraries etc.

It would be useful to further explore information on a few programs that came to the attention of the Task Force, including the Headstart Program in New York and a Health Canada sponsored pre-natal in home program delivered through the Native Council. The program provides a facilitator who coaches parents on child rearing and provides milk and juice for the prenatal period.

5 Focus resources to create conditions that support student attachment to school

It is generally understood that young people do better when they feel connected to school, feel they belong and are supported and treated fairly by their teachers. School attachment represents an emotional link to school and is a common term for a sense of connection. There are slightly different definitions of student school attachment, however some common attributes include the degree to which people at school like them, the degree to which students feel close to people at school, are happy to be at school, and feel like a part of school. Heather P. Libbey, University of Minnesota, **'Measuring Student Relationships to School: Attachment, Bonding, Connectedness and Engagement' June 2003.**

The Task Force has learned that school attachment is a protective factor **(see Appendix A)** that contributes to crime prevention. It is recommended that government focus resources to support school attachment, including encouraging academic engagement and belonging, appropriate discipline and fairness, giving students a voice, providing extracurricular activities, encouraging peer relations, promoting safety and strengthening teacher support.

6 Build capacity to offer alternative school options and flexible school programming with early access to trades, as appropriate.

Participants recommended that a plan be developed to allow earlier access (prior to grade 12 graduation) and reduced entrance requirements to trades programs. Many references were made to the need to make trades programs available in high school, similar to the vocational school options of the 1960s and 1970s, as a solution to keep youth in school.

The public consistently recommended that schools be open to the community in the evening, on week-ends and in the summer months. It was also recommended that school curriculums be comprised of broad–based programs to match the diversity of student interests, strengths, learning styles and cultures in order to prepare them for meaningful employment when they complete their secondary or post secondary education.

The Task Force supports the recommendations made by consultation participants and further recomends that government review educational service delivery, including start and end times, access to trades training prior to graduation from high school, learning styles, Saturday schools, smaller class sizes, parent engagement and volunteer/senior involvement to assist with sports, music, theater in the evening on weekends and in the summer. It is believed that these alternative options will support school attachment.

7 Remove barriers to participation in recreation programs for children and youth

Throughout the consultations Nova Scotians stressed the concept that 'every child should be able to participate'. The Task Force recommends that priority be given to eliminating obstacles and fees that discourage child and youth involvement in recreation program participation. As well, attention needs to be paid to improving access to recreation options in rural areas.

The interests of children and youth are diverse. To engage them in programs, planning needs to respond to this diversity of interest.

Nova Scotians suggest that more investment be made in existing financial grant programs and that the provincial government explore ways to transfer funding and responsibility for delivery of recreational programs and services through municipal governments.

The Task Force became aware of two examples of partnerships in Lunenburg County that are working to remove barriers to participation. The partnerships involve the Department of Education, the Aspotogan and Forest Heights Community Schools Recreation Programs and Lunenburg County Municipal Parks and Recreation.

8 Listen to youth

The Task Force recommends disciplined, systematic and regular consultation with youth from all areas of Nova Scotia, and from diverse backgrounds in order to effectively prevent and address crime.

It is suggested that the government department responsible for youth (Department of Community Services is identified by government in the response to the Nunn Commission report - Recommendation #28 – as the provincial government department responsible for youth) initiate a deliberate ongoing dialogue with youth on crime prevention.

It is further suggested that the perspectives of youth be shared with government departments and community crime prevention organizations for their consideration when developing program and service delivery plans.

9 Provide core funding for nonprofit organizations that promote crime prevention

The Task Force heard repeatedly that organizations need core funding. Core funding was referred to as regular, ongoing annual funding that an organization can rely on to cover operational costs. It is not specific to one type of program or related to a special project for a particular purpose for a specific period of time.

It is specifically recommended that a provincial non-profit crime prevention association (e.g. Crime Prevention Association of Nova Scotia) be identified to receive core funding and distribute resources to communities in Nova Scotia for specifically identified crime prevention initiatives (e.g. Neighbourhood Watch, Citizens on Patrol etc). Priority areas for funding would cover operational expenses as well as incentives to encourage volunteer citizen participation and business involvement in crime prevention programs. This association would also explore the applicability of crime prevention initiatives from other areas for use in Nova Scotia.

It is also recommended that core funding be provided to all non-profit organizations that have been determined to be making a significant contribution to crime prevention (e.g. youth centres, family resource centres, volunteer–based mentoring programs, recreation programs, early intervention and prevention programs).

There is also a need for government to simplify the process and provide assistance to non-profit agencies that apply for government funding; explore opportunities to enhance crime prevention programs through federal and provincial 'proceeds of crime' funds; and evaluate programs for accountability and effectiveness.

10 Support community mobilization: build leadership, enhance grassroots strengths and a sets and engage business partners

Nova Scotians told the Task Force there is an urgent need to support communities in their efforts to build on grassroots strengths, including culture, heritage and pride in community.

It is therefore recommended that government:

- **provide sustainable core funding to grassroots community development organizations that are attempting to strengthen their communities in order to help stabilize operations and enhance training and co-ordination**
- **fund identified position/s to provide leadership for mobilizing community crime prevention efforts**
- **support partnerships within communities and with business to foster the development of leaders and community assets.**

11 Reduce impact of racism through promotion of social and economic inclusion

During consultation, members of the African Nova Scotian and Aboriginal communities urged the Minister's Task Force to communicate the need for government to develop meaningful partnerships, accept and act on public input and provide leadership in developing legislation and policies that promote social and economic inclusion.

An article describing social and economic inclusion says **"to be included is to be accepted and to be able to participate fully within our families, our communities and our society. Those who are excluded, whether because of poverty, ill health, gender, race or lack of education, do not have the opportunity for full participation in the economic and social benefits of society". "Making the Case for Social and Economic Inclusion"** (Janet Guildford 2000) Atlantic Region, Public Health Agency of Canada.

Social exclusion has a negative effect on income, but more importantly, it damages self-esteem over generations.

Health Canada recognizes the concept of social and economic inclusion which provides an umbrella that covers all 12 determinants of health. The 'determinants of health' include:

- **income and social status**
- **social support networks**
- **education**
- **employment and working conditions**
- **physical environments**
- **social environments**
- **biology and genetic endowment**
- **personal health practices and copying skills**
- **healthy child development**
- **health services**
- **gender**
- **culture**

Both concepts – social and economic inclusion and the determinants of health – emphasize the importance of engaging partners from all sectors and considering the ways in which the determinants of health interact and impact on crime prevention. The spiraling costs associated with poor health status and the increasing poverty and economic inequality in Canada add urgency to the need for effective leadership.

The Task Force therefore recommends engaging and promoting participation of members of African Nova Scotian, Aboriginal and visible minority communities in social and economic inclusion planning, which is directly and indirectly related to crime prevention.

It also recommends a communication strategy that indicates that overt acts of racism are hate crimes and will not be tolerated by government or government funded organizations and persons concerned about crime prevention.

It is recommended that The Offices of African Nova Scotian and Aboriginal Affairs educate government and the community about the factors influencing over representation of African Nova Scotian and Aboriginal persons in the criminal justice system and participate with government in the development of a strategy to address this over representation.

The Ministries responsible for African Nova Scotian, Aboriginal and visible minority affairs should be provided with resources to deal effectively with issues related to inclusion and it's connection to crime prevention.

12 Remove access obstacles to schools and other community facilities

The Task Force heard many concerns regarding access to schools and other community facilities. It proposes that government work to eliminate fees and fund liability insurance to improve access to school buildings, arenas, pools etc. for recreation and community events.

An example of partnerships between education and municipal recreation is the Forest Heights Community School in Lunenburg County. This partnership is worthy of further exploration as it has been described as a community school with many recreational options that are accessible to children, youth and families. Another program that can be further explored is the Manitoba Lighthouse program, part of the Neighbourhoods Alive! Program that helps develop partnerships that support recreational, educational and social programs for young people.

13 Reduce impact of illicit drugs on Nova Scotians through the development of a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary Nova Scotia Drug Strategy

Every area of Nova Scotia identified concerns regarding the impact of illicit drug use on children, youth and adults as a priority.

It was largely suggested that thefts and vandalism are frequently related to alcohol and cannabis use. Also, where violent crime was the issue, it was frequently cited that harder drugs, such as cocaine, were in use.

Participants identified priorities including controlling access to illicit drugs, reducing dependence on drugs, and strengthening prevention, enforcement and sentencing, to ensure drug trafficking is no longer a 'crime that pays'. Adult and youth contributing to the consultations expressed concerns that some adults are poor role models given their alcohol and drug use. They also said there is an increase in societal acceptance of marijuana; increasingly easy access to drugs; and an increase of drug use at younger ages. The harmful influence of drug traffickers who expose youth to harder drugs and addictions round out some of the complex factors related to concerns that citizens have about drug use in Nova Scotia.

It is recommended that a focus be placed on prevention, education and treatment for addictions, as well as, deterrence and enforcement related to drug trafficking. There was specific concern raised about need to ensure access to drug treatment in rural areas.

A communication and social marketing plan is required to clearly articulate the message that drug-related crime and that the effects of drug use 'do not pay'.

In keeping with this recommendation, it is important that the provincial government support the development of a national drug strategy.

14 Commit to ensuring adequate rehabilitation and reintegration support for offenders.

Nova Scotians told the Task Force that offenders released from youth correction facilities and adult prisons need support that focuses on rehabilitation and community reintegration. It is important to promote conditions for social inclusion and reduce recidivism.

The Task Force recommends enhancing probation and provincial corrections services, both in the community and within correctional institutions. It is important to provide offenders the supports necessary to assist them in making constructive choices and becoming contributing members of society. These supports include case management, literacy support, trades training, apprenticeship options, individual and family counselling, community connections, mental and physical health services, education, employment, spiritual, recreational, cultural, leisure and mentoring programs.

Partnerships with community, health, education, recreation, economic development and community services will be necessary to ensure the resources needed for case plans are accessible and culturally appropriate.

It is also recommended that the Department of Justice consult with Statistics Canada about the feasibility of integrating corrections information into the upcoming geocoding (geographical coding) of Halifax. It would be helpful to determine which communities offenders are being released in to determine if offender supports need to be enhanced in those areas.

15 Increase police resources.

Police visibility, a strong presence in communities, and partnerships with community organizations were seen to be directly responsible for relationship building, confidence in reporting crime and reducing the fear generally experienced by seniors and others in high crime areas.

People stressed the importance of police resources to fight the impact of drug trafficking and use; reduce the impact of internet crime; and provide focused attention on unsolved crime and criminally active areas. It is therefore recommended that police resources be increased to establish drug, internet, investigative and anti-crime enforcement teams throughout the province.

People spoke positively about police partnerships with schools and encouraged enhancing and expanding such partnerships across the province to create positive police/student relationships.

It is suggested that a 'proceeds of crime' investigative unit be created to deal with property obtained through organized criminal activity. The proceeds could be used to provide much needed funding to non-profit crime prevention organizations.

A number of citizens who live in rural parts of Nova Scotia expressed concern about the lack of 24 hour a day, seven day per week police coverage in their communities. It is suggested that front line policing be enhanced to ensure adequate (24/7) around the clock coverage in all parts of Nova Scotia.

As well, it is important to note that when police resources are increased there will be a need to increase the capacity and effectiveness of court services to deal with cases in a timely manner.

14 Ensure appropriate sentencing by strengthening the public prosecution services role in making stiffer sentencing recommendations.

There is a pervasive sense on the part of the public that some sentences are highly inappropriate and lenient for serious offences. There were repeated references that 'the punishment needs to be seen to fit the crime'. Faith in the system is eroding because of the perception that there is no accountability to the public on the part of judges who deliver the sentences.

It is recommended that the Minister of Justice direct the Public Prosecution Service to seek stronger sentences in accordance with the provisions available within the criminal code.

It is further recommended that stiffer sentences be complemented by programming that addresses root causes of crime.

It would also be advisable for the Department of Justice to continue working at the Federal, Provincial, Territorial level in reviews of the Criminal Code to ensure that sentencing is appropriate, and to continue to lobby the federal government for changes to the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

17 Examine alternatives, including specialty court processes, for appropriate responses to mental health, drug and domestic violence issues.

During consultations, Nova Scotians encouraged government to explore alternatives to dealing with chronic offenders in areas such as mental health, drugs and domestic violence.

A great deal of concern was expressed about the criminalization of individuals with severe mental health issues. There is recognition that people who do not have immediate access to adequate and appropriate mental health supports and housing options often find themselves before a judge in the criminal justice system. People with mental health issues currently in the correctional system are of concern to the justice system and corrections staff. The increasing use of criminal justice to deal with these issues is one of the consequences of the de-institutionalization movement and wait lists for mental health supports and services.

Police in the Halifax Regional Municipality indicate that each year there are approximately 1800 calls related to people with mental health issues. Police involvement with people with mental illness is only helpful if it improves access to needed support. A special unit was created to work with Capital District Health Authority for response to persons experiencing mental health crises.

Family violence was raised as a specific crime of concern to Nova Scotians. Issues of concern include delays in court proceedings, victims recantation of statements, high trial collapse rates, lenient and inappropriate sentences for perpetrators and court order.

Nova Scotians also indicated that government should look at other options to deal with drug addicted offenders. As priority # 11 recommends, focus should be placed on prevention, education, treatment, deterrence and enforcement.

In light of the above, it is recommended that specialty courts for persons challenged by mental health issues, family violence and drug use be explored for the benefits they may provide to the person in front of the court, the service delivery system and the citizens of Nova Scotia. Different approaches are needed for each issue, however collaboration among service providers, legal services and the judiciary to ensuring the most appropriate response and follow up would be worthy of consideration.

18 Act on Task Force recommendations and report back to the community.

The Task Force recommends that a position be created to champion the review of programs listed in **Appendix G** and work with communities on actions that will be taken in response to public input to the Minister's Task Force. This will help maintain the confidence in government's commitment to listen to the public about crime prevention that has begun to build through the Task Force consultation process.

Nova Scotians consistently expressed their appreciation for the efforts of volunteer Task Force members and the Minister of Justice for supporting a consultation process that allowed citizens to provide input within their own communities.

They want to ensure their voices have been heard and they repeatedly called on government to act on public input.

Finally, the Task Force recommends that government develop a communication strategy to orient all government departments and appropriate community organizations to the Task Force recommendations and the resulting provincial crime prevention strategy.

Many of the Task Force recommended priorities are complementary to those made in the Honourable D. Merlin Nunn's report, Spiralling Out of Control, Lessons Learned from a Boy in Trouble – Report of the Nunn Commission of Inquiry. **Appendix H**, contains a quick reference chart to indicate which of the Task Force recommended priorities were supported by youth and which priorities complement the Nunn Commission report.

Conclusion

Action by government on the recommended priorities will help community members support and value the growth and development of children and youth, and carry out the roles they said they are willing to play in crime prevention.

Nova Scotians stated they will maintain their involvement in volunteer activities and will work to attract more volunteers to these activities if they are supported. Citizens are willing to collaborate and take ownership by developing effective partnerships and developing the strengths and leadership within their communities, however they need support to reach their potential.

Nova Scotians asked government to provide leadership in crime prevention and focus on funding, co-ordination, engagement, collaboration, education, legislation, communication, programming, research and evaluation.

We will close this report by referencing two quotes that seem to appropriately address collaboration:

"When we have partnerships between volunteer organizations and police departments and town councils, there is a lot more that unites us than there is that divides us."

"It's not somebody else's problem. Let's hug this thing and pull people together."

On behalf of the Minister's Task Force on Safer Streets and Communities, we wish to thank the Justice Minister Murray Scott for appointing and engaging a diverse group of volunteer Nova Scotians for the Task Force. It has provided us with the opportunity to consult widely with Nova Scotians and to prepare a report that will help the Government of Nova Scotia develop a provincial crime prevention strategy. It has also served to help the Task Force promote its vision of 'an improved quality of life through a safer Nova Scotia'.

Respectfully submitted,
Oralee O'Byrne and Frank Beazley, Co-chairs
On behalf of the **Minister's Task Force on Safer Streets and Communities**

Appendix A

Domain – **Individual**

Risk Factor		Protective Factor
Early Onset (ages 6 - 11 or earlier)	**Late Onset (ages 12 - 14)**	**Age of onset unknown**
• General offenses • Substance use • Being male • Aggression • Hyperactivity/Attention deficit • Problem (antisocial) behaviour • Exposure to television violence • Medical, physical problems • Low IQ • Antisocial attitudes, beliefs • Dishonesty • Psychological condition	• General offenses • Restlessness • Difficulty concentrating • Risk taking/Sensation seeking • Aggression • Being male • Physical violence • Antisocial attitudes, beliefs • Crimes against persons • Problem (antisocial) behaviour • Low IQ • Substance use • Psychological condition	• Intolerant attitude toward deviance • Cognitive, social and emotional competence • Social skills • Self-efficacy • Above average IQ • Being female • Positive social orientation • Perceived sanctions for transgressions • Good coping style • Self-related cognitions • Moral beliefs • Internal locus of control • Easy temperament • Attachment to family • Empathy • Ability to feel guilt • High accountability • Trustworthiness • Values • Problem solving • Optimism

Source: Adapted from Farrington (1998); Hawkins et al (2000); Office of the Surgeon General (2001); Shader (2003); Wasserman et al (2003); Loeber et al (2003); Smart et al (2003); Howell (2003).

Appendix A - continued

Domain – **Family**

Risk Factor		Protective Factor
Early Onset (ages 6 - 11 or earlier)	**Late Onset (ages 12 - 14)**	**Age of onset unknown**
• Low socioeconomic status/poverty • Antisocial parents • Poor parent-child relationship • Harsh, lax, or inconsistent discipline • Broken home • Separation from parents • Abusive parents/maltreatment • Neglect • Large family size	• Poor parent-child relationship • Harsh or lax discipline • Poor monitoring, supervision • Low parental involvement • Antisocial parents • Broken home • Low socioeconomic status/poverty • Abusive parents/maltreatment • Family conflict • Delinquent siblings • Large family size	• Warm, supportive relationships and bonding with parents or other adults • Good family communication • Opportunity and recognition for pro-social involvement • Parents = positive evaluation of peers • Parental monitoring • Family harmony • Secure, stable family • Strong family norms and morality • More than two years between siblings • Small family size • Responsibility for chores or required helpfulness

Source: Adapted from Farrington (1998); Hawkins et al (2000); Office of the Surgeon General (2001); Shader (2003); Wasserman et al (2003); Loeber et al (2003); Smart et al (2003); Howell (2003).

Appendix A - continued

Domain – **School**

Risk Factor		Protective Factor
Early Onset (ages 6 - 11 or earlier)	**Late Onset (ages 12 - 14)**	**Age of onset unknown**
• Poor attitude, performance	• Poor attitude, performance • Academic failure • School norms re: violence • Low bonding to school	• Positive attitude/commitment to school • Sense of belonging/attachment • Strong school motivation • Recognition for involvement in conventional activities • School achievement/ recognition for achievement • Positive school climate/ pro-social school norms • Responsibility and required helpfulness

Domain – **Peer**

• Weak social ties • Antisocial peers	• Weak social ties • Antisocial, delinquent peers • Peer rejection • Gang membership	• Friends who engage in conventional, pro-social behavior

Domain – **Community**

• Racial prejudice (age of onset unclear)	• Neighbourhood crime/violence, drugs • Neighbourhood disorganization • Access to weapons • Racial prejudice (age of onset unclear)	• Nondisadvantaged neighbourhood • Low neighbourhood crime • Access to support services • Community networking • Attachment to community • Participation in church or other community groups • Community/cultural norms against violence • Strong cultural identity and ethnic pride

Source: Adapted from Farrington (1998); Hawkins et al (2000); Office of the Surgeon General (2001); Shader (2003); Wasserman et al (2003); Loeber et al (2003); Smart et al (2003); Howell (2003).

Appendix B

Crime prevention and its importance to Nova Scotians

Crime prevention was the focal issue the focal issue addressed by the Minister's Task Force when it consulted with Nova Scotians. The following section will explain the term 'crime prevention' and will give some information on the overall crime rate in Nova Scotia, youth crime and the cost of crime to explain why crime prevention is important to Nova Scotians is provided. **http://www.gov.ns.ca/just**

Crime prevention has been described as any initiative, policy or everyday practice which reduces, avoids or eliminates victimization by crime or violence. It includes government and non-government initiatives to reduce fear of crime as well as lessen the impact of crime on victims.

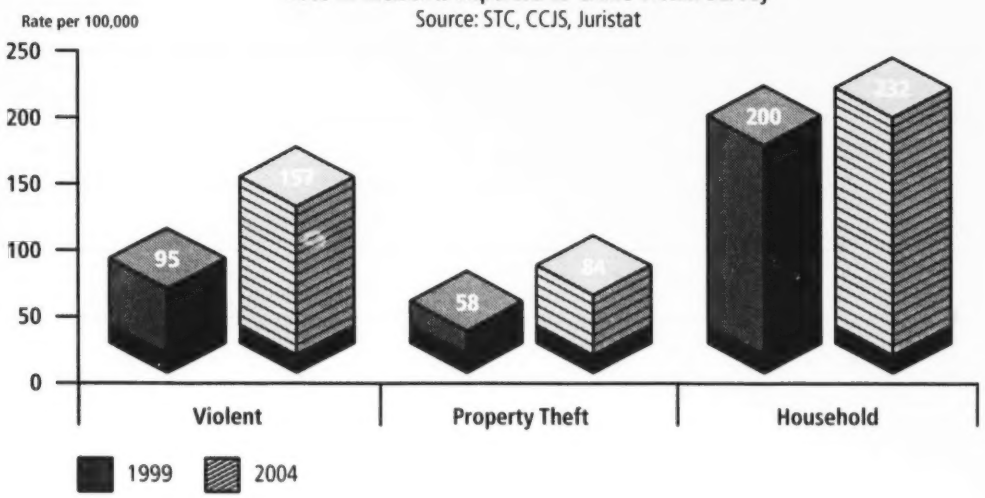
There are various settings where crime prevention takes place, including within families, schools, communities, labour markets, police agencies, courts and corrections. Given the range of settings, experts say there needs to be a balance between social development and law enforcement activities; that crime prevention needs to be addressed at the local level; and that effective crime prevention requires partnerships and cooperation between various participants and across multiple sectors. Crime prevention also encompasses a wide range of approaches, including crime prevention through social development and situational crime prevention.

Why is crime prevention important to Nova Scotians?

Overall crime rate

The crime rate is an indicator of social and economic well-being within a society. It indicates how many criminal incidents have been reported to the police for violent, property and other offences, excluding Criminal Code traffic offences. The number is standardized per 100,000 of the population so rates can be compared across communities.

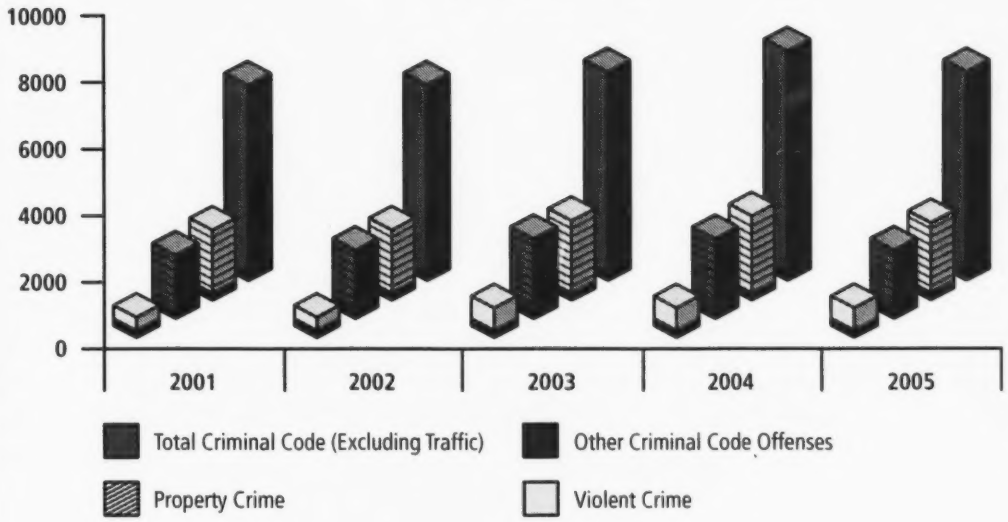
Rate of Incidents Reported to Crime Victim Survey
Source: STC, CCJS, Juristat



In Nova Scotia, the crime rate increased steadily between 2001 and 2004. Despite a decrease in 2005, the total crime rate in 2005 was higher than in 2001 for all major crime categories. It is also the highest among the Atlantic Provinces, and marginally higher than the overall Canadian crime rate. It is too early to tell whether the decline in the overall crime rate in 2005 is the beginning of a downward trend or an annual fluctuation.

The rate of violent crime and other Criminal Code offences in Nova Scotia increased between 2001 and 2003, but declined during the last two years. The rate of property crime has fluctuated over the past five years, however the rate in 2005 was higher than in 2001.

Overall Crime Rate
Source: STC, CCJS, UCR



Youth crime

The youth crime rate in 2005 increased by 3 per cent from 2004. This increase was fueled by an a 7 per cent increase in youth violent crime and a 7 per cent increase in other criminal code offences. Increases were noted in all major violent offence categories including assault (4 per cent), sexual assault (18 per cent), and robbery (41 per cent). Increases were also noted in bail violations (20 per cent) and mischief (8 per cent).

Victimization

Government also tracks the rate of violent victimization as reported through the General Social Survey (GSS), which in 2004, sampled about 24,000 individuals across Canada aged 15 years and older.

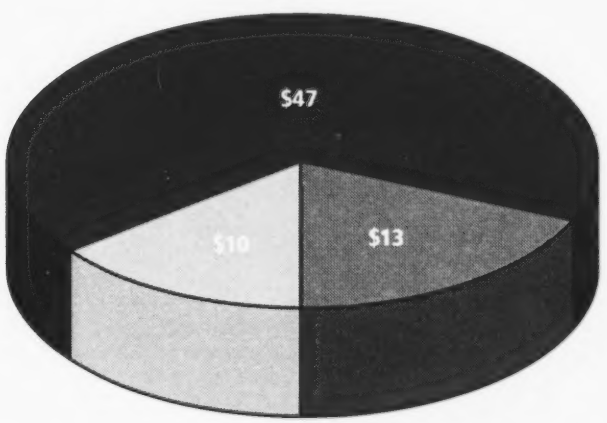
The rate of violent[2] victimization, theft and household victimization in Nova Scotia increased between 1999 and 2004. In 2004, the rate of violent victimization was 157 per 1,000 population, an increase of 65 per cent from 1999. The rate of theft of personal property was 84 per 1,000 population, an increase of 45 per cent from 1999. The rate of household victimization was 232 per 1,000 population, an increase of 16 per cent from 1999.

In 2004, Nova Scotia noted the second highest violent victimization rate in the country and Halifax had the highest violent victimization rate in the country among large urban cores with over 100,000 populations.

The risk of self-reported violent victimization was highest among young people aged 15 to 24, single people, those who frequently participated in evening activities and those who lived in an urban area.

Costs associated with crime

Cost of Crime in Billions



2 Violent Victimization includes robbery, assault and sexual assault Household victimization includes breaking and entering, motor vehicle thefts, household property thefts and vandalism.

It is difficult to measure the full cost of crime, however, the federal Department of Justice estimates that, in 2003, crime in Canada cost an estimated $70 billion, of which $47 billion was incurred by victims. Costs to victims include the value of their damaged or stolen property, pain and suffering, loss of income and productivity, and health services. Criminal justice system expenditures such as police, courts, and correctional services comprised $13 billion of the estimated total cost of crime. The remaining $10 billion was spent on defensive measures such as security devices and protective services. Property crimes cost Canadians $40 billion, violent crimes cost $18 billion and other crimes cost $12 billion.

A 2004 study by GPI Atlantic, a non-profit research group, attempted to capture the broader costs associated with crime. It is estimated that crime costs Nova Scotians an estimated $550 million a year (based on 1990s data) when one includes private spending on security services and economic losses to victims in addition to public spending on police, courts and corrections, which translates into $600 per person and climbs to $1.2 billion a year or $1,250 per person when losses due to unreported crimes, insurance fraud and shoplifting are added.

It is probable that current costs are higher still in light of higher crime rates, which leads to higher taxes for public justice expenditures, higher insurance premiums, higher rates of personal spending on security and more victim losses.

Appendix C

Consultation Question – Minister's Task Force on Safer Streets and Communities

Please consider the information presented on crime in your region.

Is your understanding or experience similar to this information? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If not, please tell us about the crimes being committed in your community.

_____

What do you feel is causing crime in your community?

_____

What are your main concerns regarding crime in your community?

_____

Tell us about the things you are proud of in your community that are helping to prevent crime and why you think they are working?

_____

Can you suggest some other solutions to help make where you live safer, now and in future?

_____

What role are you willing to play to help prevent crime in your community?

_____

What do you think are the best and most appropriate roles for the provincial government in crime prevention?

_____

Please provide any additional comments or concerns you may have regarding crime prevention.

_____

Thank you for responding to these questions

When submitting your responses, we would appreciate if you could check ✔ the demographics that apply to you:

Gender

☐ Male

☐ Female

Age

☐ under 19

☐ between 19 – 30

☐ between 31 – 54

☐ 55 plus

Ethnicity

☐ Aboriginal

☐ Acadian

☐ African Nova Scotian

☐ White

☐ Other **(Please specify)** _____

Geographic location

☐ Halifax Regional Municipality

☐ Cape Breton

☐ North Central (includes Antigonish, Colchester, Cumberland, Guysborough and Pictou Counties)

☐ South West (includes Lunenburg, Queens, Shelburne and Yarmouth Counties

☐ Valley (includes Annapolis, Digby, Hants and Kings Counties)

Please check all that apply to you in relation to your involvement with crime prevention:

☐ Concerned citizen ☐ Crime victim ☐ Community development

☐ Health ☐ Social services ☐ Education

☐ Law enforcement ☐ Other **(Please specify)** _____

If you would like to receive a copy of the Task Force's report when it is released, please provide your name and mailing address.

The creation of the Minister's Task force on Safer Streets and Communities represents an opportunity to hear from Nova Scotians and together develop solutions to crime that have their roots in Nova Scotian communities. The purpose of the consultations is to identify programs and actions that are making a positive impact in communities and ways government can support communities in their efforts to prevent crime. The end result will be a provincial crime prevention strategy developed through information gathered by the task force.

Your responses to this questionnaire may be provided to the task force in person at a public meeting, by mail, fax or e-mail as noted below. The deadline for submissions is March 31st, 2007.

Mail, Fax or E-mail to: **Minister's Task Force on Safer Streets and Communities**

Nova Scotia Department of Justice

Policy, Planning and Research, 5151 Terminal Road, P.O. Box 7

Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2L6.

902 424 6403 Fax

sheparci@gov.ns.ca

Appendix D

Consultation Dates and Locations – **Public Meetings**

February 5
Port Hawkesbury Civic Centre, Port Hawkesbury

February
Falmouth Elementary School, Falmouth

February 8
Bethany United Church, Halifax

February 13
Northbrook Community Centre, Dartmouth

February 20
Amherst Regional High School, Amherst

February 21
Parrsboro Regional High School, Parrsboro

February 26
Hants East Rural High School, Milford Station

February 27
Bible Hill Village Hall, Bible Hill

February 27
Annapolis Basin Conference Centre, Cornwallis

February 28
Horizon Achievement Centre, Sydney

March 1
Municipal Office County Chambers, Antigonish

March 5
North Sydney Firefighter's Club, North Sydney

March 5
Pictou Antigonish Regional Library, New Glasgow

March 7
Kentville Volunteer Fire Hall, Kentville

March 13
Black Cultural Centre, Dartmouth

March 14
Musquodoboit Harbour Fire Hall, Musquodoboit Harbour

March 15
Knox United Church, Lower Sackville

March 19
Liverpool Fire Station, Liverpool

March 20
Shelburne Community Centre, Shelburne

March 22
North Branch Library, Halifax

March 26
Nova Scotia Community College, Bridgewater

March 27
Nova Scotia Community College, Yarmouth

March 28
Dominion Volunteer Fire Hall, Dominion

Consultation Dates and Locations – **Focus Groups**

February 5
New Horizons Senior Club, Arichat

February 7
Hantsport Fire Hall, Hantsport

February 7
Inverness Fire Hall, Inverness

February 8
Captain William Spry Centre, Spryfield

February 13
Northbrook Community Centre, Dartmouth

February 20
Amherst Regional High School, Amherst

February 21
Parrsboro Town Hall Chambers, Parrsboro

February 21
Cape Smokey Elementary School, Ingonish

February 26
Nova Family of Schools Office, Elmsdale

February 27
Millbrook First Nations Council Chambers, Truro

February 27
Annapolis Basin Conference Centre, Cornwallis

February 28
Horizon Achievement Centre, Sydney

March 1
Municipal Office County Chambers, Antigonish

March 5
New Glasgow Policing Services, New Glasgow

March 6
Municipality of District of Lunenburg Office, Bridgewater

March 8
Nova Scotia Youth Centre, Waterville

March 8
Nova Scotia Community College, Yarmouth

March 16
Tatamagouche Centre (2 sessions with youth), Tatamagouche

March 23
Keshen Goodman Public Library, Halifax

March 29
Eskasoni Fish and Wildlife, Eskasoni

Appendix E

Consultation Participants were drawn from:

Addiction Services

Academic Community Members

Business representatives

Children's Aid Society

Community Development

Concerned Citizens

Crime Prevention Associations

Crime Victims

Community Health Boards

Chamber of Commerce

Crown Attorney

Department of Community Services
(Employment Support and Income Assistance, Services for Persons with Disabilities, Family and Children's Services)

Domestic Violence/Transition Houses

Ecology Action

Education

Federal Parole Services

Faith-based organizations

Family Resource Centres

First Nations organizations

Guidance Councillor

Health Administration

Human Rights

Interpreters – Deaf Community

Department of Justice
(Crown attorney, Corrections, Probation services)

Legal Aid

MADD

Municipal Councillors

Mental Health Services

Municipal Police

Municipal Recreation

Municipal staff

MLA's

Mayors Media

Nova Scotia Youth Secretariat

Neighbourhood Watch

Regional Libraries

Police Boards

Private Psychologist

Restorative Justice

RCMP

Seniors

Seniors Safety Programs

Students

Salvation Army

School Board

Service Canada

St. Leonard's Society

Seniors Safety Programs

Transition Houses

Youth

Youth Centres

Youth Secretariat

Youth Services

Youth Health Centre

Victim Services

Women's Groups

Appendix F

Programs and Approaches Currently Valued by the Community to Prevent Crime

The following list of programs identified by participants is grouped into community-based, family-based, and school-based categories:

Community-based:

- **Big Brothers Big Sisters**
- **business initiatives (e.g. Enfield Earthkeepers)**
- **cadets**
- **community crime prevention associations (e.g. Neighbourhood Watch, Citizens on Patrol)**
- **Seniors Safety Programs**
- **crisis intervention services (e.g. Mobile Mental Health)**
- **engagement/inclusiveness (e.g. programs that promote community connectedness, pride, volunteerism)**
- **Healthy Beginnings**
- **High Risk Domestic Violence Case Coordination Protocol Framework**
- **interagency collaborations (e.g. Northern Partners, Cape Breton Youth Services Team, Community Partnership on Drug Abuse - Cape Breton, Cape Breton Network for Children)**
- **police presence on streets, in community and in school for relationship building and intelligence gathering (e.g. community policing, seniors safety programs)**
- **recreational activities (e.g. dances, skateboard Parks, youth identified interests etc.)**
- **rehabilitation (e.g. restorative justice, Schools Assisting Police and Probation services, SAPPS, healing circles)**
- **subsidized daycare**
- **transition houses for women and children**
- **youth centres (e.g. Whitney Pier, Shelburne, ECHO, Bridges)**
- **youth focused employment and support services (e.g. VANSDA - Valley African Nova Scotian Development Association)**

Family-based:

- **family resource centres**
- **parent involvement and supervision (e.g. consistency, active coaching, teaching kids about consequences)**
- **parental support programs (e.g. prenatal counselling, post natal home visiting and counselling, Healthy Beginnings)**
- **providing skills to help kids to become responsible**

School-based:

- anti-bullying programs
- ASIST - Adolescent Support Interagency Service Team (Cumberland County multi-agency approach to coordinating and enhancing service to youth with externalizing behaviours)
- BEST - Better Education Support Treatment Program, community based interagency multi-modal multi-systemic early intervention and prevention program for children with behaviour and social difficulties and their families
- Centre 24/7
- community–based policing in the schools
- DARE
- PEBS - Positive and Effective Behavioural Supports - a framework to develop school codes of conduct and a systems approach for development of individual positive support plans for students who need to develop social competence (Primary to Grade 12)
- pebsCONNECT - Positive and Effective Behavioural Supports – proactive intervention to meet needs of middle school/junior high school students at risk of dropping out of school
- Roots of Empathy
- shock impact presentations (e.g. MADD - Mothers against Drunk Driving)
- youth health centre partnerships with district health authorities and community agencies (e.g. Chignecto School Board partnership with the local district health authority)

Appendix G

Other Solutions

The Minister's Task Force recommends a review of the following community-based, family-based and school-based programs and approaches for potential or broader application in Nova Scotia:

Community-based:

- **Action for Neighbourhood Change, Healthy Housing, Healthy Community Project, Spryfield**
- **Boot camps to teach consequences, Alberta and British Columbia models named**
- **Curfews for youth**
- **Coalition of Community Safety, Health and Well-being, a loose coalition of influential national organizations which have chosen to collaborate with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police to promote a vision and 'best practices' for the practical realization of community safety, health and well-being.**
- **Community Based Economic Development**
- **Community capacity building and mobilization funding, encourage National Crime Prevention Centre to transfer funds to Province for distribution**
- **Community Safety/crime prevention co-ordinators**
- **Connect Program, Amherst, focus on child connection to family and community**
- **Enfield Earthkeepers, citizen engagement of youth for employment and community pride**
- **Healthy Place Framework, Chebucto Community Development Association**
- **Crisis Intervention Service, HRM, a partnership between Capital Health Mental Health, IWK and HR Police to provide assessment, stabilization and treatment, as appropriate, in all District Health Authorities in HRM and at the IWK**
- **Family & Co. Free quarterly Information Guide listing new activities and things to do with children in HRM**
- **Judges need to be engaged in community crime prevention discussions**
- **License for Alcohol consumption, similar to license for driving, holds adults accountable if they supply alcohol to minor and ensures youth are of age to make purchase**
- **Lighthouses/Neighbourhood Alive Program, Manitoba Justice fund to develop partnerships that support programming by and for youth**
- **Manitoba Attorney General Safer Communities Award, recognizes organizations and individuals who make outstanding contributions to crime prevention**
- **Military service sentences for perpetrators of serious crime**
- **Netherlands's approach to community inclusiveness**
- **North End Dartmouth Community Coalition - Knowledge is Power - Youth Asset Building focus**
- **PEPBRO Divas, Uniacke Square, community engagement, beautification, recreation**
- **Alberta Drug Endangered Child Act**

- Police Anti-Drug squads, Internet Crime Teams, Integrated approaches to crime, with increased visibility
- Publicize names and sentences for adult and youth offenders
- Recipe for Success - Safer and Stronger Community Project, Gottingen Street area
- Rehabilitation programming and more probation/parole services for offenders to reduce recidivism
- Search InstituteSM - five action strategies for transforming Communities and Society so all young people are valued and thrive - provides leadership, knowledge and resources to promote healthy children, youth and communities
- Saskatchewan RCMP Cadet Corp, engaged gang members, nominated for Governor
- General's Award
- Social Marketing Campaigns e.g. MADD, stop family violence, anti-bullying, anti-drug use, community pride
- South End Baptist Church, Dartmouth, opens building for community activities
- Sustainable funding i.e. Under Siege Update: a follow-up study of non-profit, community based, social service agencies
- United Way's Vibrant Neighbourhood Strategy, neighbourhood level community building

Family-based:

- Adopt-A-Library Literacy Program, fights crime one book at a time, stems from basic message that literacy levels and criminal behaviour can be related - police and library partnership
- Arlington's Partnership for children, youth and families build social assets of youth
- Attachment Intervention, Dr. Dianne Benoit Hospital for Sick Kids Infant Mental Health parent and professional guide (with video) 'Ending the Cycle of Hurt'
- Calgary transportation passes for low income families
- Co-ordinator of Interagency services for families
- Family Help Program - partnership of Mental Health and IWK/Dalhousie is a distance based early intervention program offering assistance to families of children with mild to moderate common childhood disorders - parents are provided self-help manuals,videotapes and audiotapes and are supported via a telephone coach based at IWK - modules offered include Behaviour Disorder - Parenting an Active or ADHD child (3-12 years) and other issues
- Hawaii Project, work with expectant mothers in wrap around approach
- Incentives for volunteers, e.g. tax credits, credits for vehicle registration, incentives to engage youth in volunteering, reimbursement for some expenses
- Income tax incentives to provide option for parent to stay at home to be maximally involved in guiding child's life
- Manitoba Parental Responsibility Program, victims of youth crime can recover money for damages, bill of responsibility to parents for child vandalism

- Millbrook pilot for children with Attention Deficit Disorder
- New Zealand approach to support for new mothers
- Nova Scotia Youth Corps, social/youth development focus
- PALS Program, Dr. Stephen Schneider, Saint Mary's University for social development of children ages 5 to 13 years, based on principles of Crime Prevention through Social Development
- Parent tool kit
- Re-ordering Priorities: How the Budget can Address Poverty in a Meaningful Way,
- Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers submission to House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance
- Saskatoon's Communities for Children

School-based:

- Alternate educational options e.g. apprenticeship programs and experiential training,
- STEP (Skilled Trades Exploration Program- Parkview/NSCC), Outward Bound, Heartwood Youth Services, Alternate/Transition Programs - South Shore Regional School Board, O2 (Options and Opportunities)
- Character development education and civic responsibility courses (B.C., Alberta)
- Fourth R, violence prevention program
- Frontier college Literacy Organization, North Dartmouth, free after school literacy tutoring
- Growing Great Kids Curriculum, Task Force on Community Preventative Services 2003 (Centre for Disease Control) re: early childhood home visiting
- In school suspensions
- Maintain school attachment, Aboriginal and African NS incentive program, individualized programs for all types of child intelligence, engage parents
- Red Deer Public School District Alternative School Programs
- Substance abuse counselling in the schools, Best Practices in School Based Drug
- Education for Grades 7-9, NS Health Promotion and Protection
- Truancy officer, Italy
- Virginia mentorship program at elementary level, military adopts a classroom, senior/child interaction, no cost, volunteer driven
- Wellness Clinic for School Entry, Hants West District School Board partnership with
- Public Health, NS Hearing and Speech, Addiction Services, Read to Me,
- Family Resource Centre, Mental Health, Kingstec Play Station, Family and
- Children's Services of West Hants, HRDC funded Program Co-ordinator
- Youth crime stoppers/youth citizens on patrol, give education credit for participation
- Youth navigators to assist with strengths and interest identification, access to programs

Appendix H

Correlation of Task Force Recommended Priorities with Nunn Commission and Youth Input

Below is a quick reference list of recommended priorities with identification of those that complement recommendations from the Nunn Commission and those that are in keeping with youth input.

Recommended Priorities	Nunn	Youth
1. Enhance Primary prevention and early intervention for children (birth to 5 years)	✔ **26, 27, 28, 29**	✔
2. Enhance prevention and intervention with a focus on the provision of services in school (5 to 20 years)	✔ **26, 27, 28, 29, 31**	✔
3. Reduce wait time to ensure timely access to services	✔ **1, 2, 26, 28**	
4. Provide support to Parents	✔ **29**	✔
5. Focus resources to create conditions that support student attachment to school	✔ **31, 32, 33, 34**	✔
6. Build capacity to offer alternative school options and flexible school programming with early access to trades, as appropriate.	✔ **12, 31, 32, 34**	✔
7. Remove barriers to participation in recreation programs for children and youth		✔
8. Listen to youth	✔ **26, 28**	✔
9. Provide core funding for nonprofit organizations that promote crime prevention		✔
10. Support community mobilization: build leadership and enhance grassroots strengths and assets.	✔ **26**	
11. Reduce impact of racism through promotion of social and economic inclusion		
12. Remove access obstacles to schools and other community facilities	✔ **26**	✔
13. Reduce impact of illicit drugs on Nova Scotians through the development of a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary Nova Scotia drug strategy		✔
14. Commit to ensuring adequate rehabilitation and reintegration support for offenders		✔
15. Increase police resources	✔ **9**	✔
16. Ensure appropriate sentencing through strengthening public prosecution services role in making stiffer sentencing recommendations.	✔ **10, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25**	✔
17. Examine alternatives, including specialty court processes, for appropriate responses to mental health, drug and domestic violence issues.	✔ **7**	
18. Act on Task Force recommendations and report back to the community.	✔ **30**	

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Task Force Subcommittee Members

Marilyn Anderson
Robert Angel
Paul Calder
Ed Cayer
Joe Dipersio
Christiane Feix
Ron Joiner
Jill Keddy
Ken Langille
Andy MacDonald
Irene MacInnis
Ron Seney
Kimberly Timmons
Angie McWaid
Ambrose White

Federal Department of Justice,
Crime Prevention Centre
Jim Ellsworth

Seniors Secretariat
Nancy Radcliffe

Office of Immigration
Elizabeth Mills

Voluntary Planning
Leo Dillman

African Nova Scotian Affairs
Wayn Hamilton

Department of Community Services
Darlene MacInnis

Public Service Commission
Charlie MacDonald

Department of Justice
French Language Services
Leda Chiasson
Simone Pothier
Megan Farquhar

Policy Planning and Research
Anna Huntley
Angela Poirier
Valerie Pottie Bunge
Janice Gillis-MacLean
Bob Purcell

Human Resources
Mary Jane Wortman

Learning Centre
Noreen Stadey

Communications
Cathy MacIsaac

Minister's Task Force Project Co-ordinator
Carol Shepard Conrad

NOVA SCOTIA
Justice